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C O N F I D E N T I A L AMMAN 002258

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/08/2007

TAGS: KBCT PREL ETRD IS US JO

SUBJECT: GOJ TAKES ACTIONS TO DISCOURAGE BOYCOTT OF U.S. PRODUCTS

REF: A. AMMAN 2221

1B. STATE 84703

1C. AMMAN 2093

Classified By: CDA Gregory L. Berry for Reasons 1.5 (B)(D)

¶1. (C) Responding to our earlier demarche on the local call for a boycott of U.S. goods (ref a), Acting Foreign Minister Shaher Bak told Charge and PolCouns May 8 that Prime Minister Ali Abul Ragheb was trying to discourage the boycott of U.S. goods in Jordan. Bak reported that Abul Ragheb has over the past two days spoken to prominent members of the private sector and media, as well as the pro-boycott professional associations, telling them that the boycott hurts Jordanian companies and could cost Jordanian jobs. Bak said the PM had asked these groups to "take the interests of Jordan and its economy into account" before calling for a boycott of U.S. goods. Holding up a copy of the Islamist weekly paper al-Sabeel, however, Bak said it would be impossible for the GOJ to convince Islamic activists to give up their boycott calls.

¶2. (C) PolCouns separately covered the same ground with Ali al-Ayed, Personal Assistant to FonMin Marwan Muasher. PolCouns noted that several contacts had heard direct calls for boycott of U.S. products in Amman mosques during Friday prayers. Ayed said that the Ministry would contact the Ministry of Religious Affairs and ask that it discourage leaders of prayer from repeating the boycott call during Friday prayers.

BERRY